

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 LONDON 20061 01 OF 02 102222Z

67

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /058 W

----- 086732

R 102111Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8663

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USMISSION OECD PARIS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 20061

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, PDEV, UK

SUBJECT: DEVOLUTION: REFERENDUM, AYE, AN ENGLISH

DIMENSION. NO

REF: LONDON 19409

SUMMARY. THE PRESS REPORTS, APPARENTLY ON THE BASIS OF INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM HIGHLY PLACED GOVERNMENT SOURCES, THAT THE CABINET HAS DECIDED TO GO AHEAD WITH A REFERENDUM ON DEVOLUTION IN SCOTLAND AND WALES. THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO PUBLISHED ITS LONG-PROMISED CONSULTATIVE PAPER ON DEVOLUTION FOR THE REGIONS OF ENGLAND. ALTHOUGH EMPHASIZING ITS CONSULTATIVE NATURE AND CALLING FOR REASONED DISCUSSION OF THE OPTIONS, THE PAPER FIRMLY REJECTS FEDERALISM AND SUGGESTS THAT REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES WITH LEGISLATIVE POWERS WOULD BE UNDESIRABLE. END SUMMARY.

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 LONDON 20061 01 OF 02 102222Z

1. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, THE CABINET DECEMBER 9 DECID-
ED TO ACCEPT THE IDEA OF A DEVOLUTION REFERENDUM IN
SCOTLAND AND WALES. ANNOUNCEMENT OF THIS DECISION IS
EXPECTED TO TAKE PLACE NEXT WEEK DURING THE SECOND READ-
ING DEBATE OF THE DEVOLUTION BILL. THE DETAIL AND
UNIFORMITY OF THESE REPORTS, TOGETHER WITH THE EARLIER
REMARKS OF GOVERNMENT SPOKESMEN (REFTEL), INDICATE THAT
THEY ARE ACCURATE.

2. IT HAS BEEN EVIDENT TO US (AND TO GOVERNMENT
OFFICIALS RESPONSIBLE FOR DEVOLUTION POLICY) FOR SOME
TIME THAT THE REFERENDUM CARROT WOULD PROVIDE A POSITIVE
INCENTIVE FOR SOME RELUCTANT LABOR MP'S TO SUPPORT THE
DEVOLUTION BILL, THUS THE MANY HINTS OF GOVERNMENT
SPOKESMEN. THE CABINET'S DECISION SUGGESTS THAT THE
GOVERNMENT WILL INTRODUCE ITS OWN AMENDMENT TO THE BILL,
THUS RETAINING SUBSTANTIVE CONTROL. HAD IT LEFT THE
INITIATIVE TO BACKBENCHERS OR THE OPPOSITION FRONT
BENCH, COMMONS MIGHT WELL HAVE APPROVED AN AMENDMENT
WHICH WOULD BE UNACCEPTABLE TO THE GOVERNMENT (E.G.
A NATION-WIDE REFERENDUM). THE GOVERNMENT'S ACTION
SHOULD INCREASE THE DEVOLUTION BILL'S PROSPECTS FOR
PASSAGE, BUT WE STILL RATE THE ODDS AT LESS THAN EVEN
MONEY.

3. HONORING ITS EARLIER COMMITMENT TO PUBLISH A DIS-
CUSSION PAPER ON THE QUESTION OF DEVOLUTION FOR THE
REGIONS OF ENGLAND, THE GOVERNMENT DECEMBER 9 RELEASED A
DOCUMENT ENTITLED "THE ENGLISH DIMENSION". STRESSING
ITS CONSULTATIVE ASPECT, DESCRIBING THE PRINCIPAL
ARGUMENTS PRO AND CON, AND DISCUSSING IN VERY GENERAL
TERMS THE SEVERAL OPTIONS, THE PAPER GOES ON TO SUGGEST
THAT ELECTED ASSEMBLIES FOR THE REGIONS OF ENGLAND WOULD
BE DIVISIVE AND ARE UNDESIRABLE. THE PAPER ALSO DISCARDS
THE POSSIBILITY OF A FEDERAL ARRANGEMENT ENCOMPASSING

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 LONDON 20061 02 OF 02 102124Z

67

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /058 W

----- 085418

R 102111Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8664
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS
USMISSION OECD PARIS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 02 OF 02 LONDON 20061

ENGLAND, SCOTLAND, WALES AND NORTHERN IRELAND, BUT
INDICATES THAT A CASE MIGHT BE MADE FOR SOME
ADMINISTRATIVE DECENTRALIZATION, FOR EXAMPLE THE ESTAB-
LISHMENT OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES. FURTHER
DETAILS FOLLOW BY AIRGRAM.

4. THE COMMITMENT TO PUBLISH THIS PAPER WAS MADE
NEARLY TWO YEARS AGO WHEN THE GOVERNMENT THOUGHT IT MIGHT
BE POSSIBLE TO GAIN THE SUPPORT OF SOME ENGLISH ANTI-
DEVOLUTION MP'S BY PROMISING DEVOLVED GOVERNMENT FOR THE
ENGLISH REGIONS. SINCE THAT TIME IT HAD BECOME
INCREASINGLY CLEAR THAT THERE WAS NO REAL DEMAND FOR
DEVOLVED POWER IN ENGLAND -- INDEED, THE IDEA MET WITH
CONSIDERABLE RESISTANCE IN PARLIAMENT AND ELSEWHERE --
THAT THE CASE FOR DEVOLUTION IN SCOTLAND AT LEAST IS
SUI GENERIS AND THAT THE PRINCIPAL IMPLICATIONS OF
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 LONDON 20061 02 OF 02 102124Z

REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES ARE FORMIDABLE, IF NOT OVERWHELMING.
THE INITIAL RESPONSE TO THE DISCUSSION PAPER WAS GENERALLY
ONE OF RELIEF, THOUGH IT HAS BEEN CRITICIZED FOR BEING
TOO SUPERFICIAL. SOME OF THE ARGUMENTS OUTLINED IN THE
PAPER, MOREOVER, MAY BE USED BY ANTI-DEVOLUTIONISTS AS
ADDITIONAL GROUNDS TO OPPOSE THE SCOTLAND AND WALES
BILL.

ARMSTRONG

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: GOVERNMENT REFORM, PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT, LEGISLATIVE BILLS, SELFDETERMINATION, PROGRESS REPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 DEC 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976LONDON20061
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760457-0156
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761255/aaaabuxn.tel
Line Count: 167
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 LONDON 19409
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <05 APR 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <06 APR 2004 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DEVOLUTION: REFERENDUM, AYE, AN ENGLISH DIMENSION. NO
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, PDEV, UK
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006